

Dear Friends,

As we bring 2011 to a close, I wanted to provide you with an update on some of the top issues that touched our communities this year from Washington to the Central Coast.

As always, please feel free to forward this email to friends and neighbors. I also want to invite you to visit [my website](#) for more information, and to follow me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to share you thoughts on issues facing our communities.

KEY ISSUES OF 2011

Congressional Gridlock - In my 19 years of serving in the House of Representatives I have worked in a Democratic majority and minority, and under both Republican and Democratic presidents. In that time I have never seen the brand of extreme partisan politics that today have brought our nation's capitol to a halt. [Read more...](#)

Investing in Healthy Futures - This year I took the role of Ranking Minority Member on the Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee, a position that has allowed me to advocate for our local agriculture industry and the increase access of healthy meals. Before the end of the year, Congress passed—and the President signed—the committee's appropriations bill that provides critical funding for food safety and nutrition programs. [Read more...](#)

Supporting our Troops and Veterans - As thousands of service members continue to be deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, this year—and every year—we honored them with a renewed commitment to keep our promise of support. Without the brave efforts of generations of soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen and their families, our country would not be the beacon of freedom, hope and stability that it is today. [Read more...](#)

Protecting Seniors' Benefits - After two years, Social Security beneficiaries received their first Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increase to help them deal with increasing consumer prices and health care costs. Seniors received a notice in mid-November detailing the 3.6 percent benefits increase set to begin in January of 2012. [Read more...](#)

Conserving our Beaches and Oceans - This year our Oceans, and the people working to protect them, received some much needed support. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I was able to reverse \$48 million in funding cuts for critical ocean conservation issues. Also, legislation to support marine debris removal and prevention received two hearings that will bring the bill closer to vote. [Read more...](#)

Iraq and Afghanistan - This year we welcomed the news that our troops will be coming home from Iraq just in time to celebrate the Holidays with their families. While this gives us cause to celebrate, I joined with many of my Congressional colleagues - and many of you - to continue to call on the President to bring our troops home from Afghanistan. [Read more...](#)

Strengthening Our Tourism Industry - As a Co-Chair of House Travel and Tourism Caucus I have worked to support the tourism industry on the Central Coast and across the nation. This year, I introduced the TRIP Act, legislation to strengthen the tourism industry and job creation through the promotion of regional domestic destinations. [Read more...](#)

RESOURCES YOU CAN USE

Stay Connected - Everyday our nation's capitol is swirling with activity and debate over issues critical to our communities. To help keep you up to date on what's going on in Washington and on the Central Coast, I invite you to follow me on Facebook, Twitter—two great forums to view quick information and share your thoughts and opinions. [Read more...](#)

Are You Visiting Washington, DC? - If you're visiting our nation's capital, I am ready to help you plan a memorable trip! My staff can help reserve tours for many of the most popular sites in DC including the White House, the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Pentagon, the Kennedy Center and the Department of State Diplomatic Reception Rooms. [Read more...](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read my update. I want to wish you a safe and healthy holiday season, and I look forward to seeing you on the Central Coast.

Sincerely,



